

## Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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P 101350Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5281

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0200

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, OEXC

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT OF WIFE OF PRESIDENT MICOMBERO TO U.S.

1. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT YET SUBMITTED REQUEST TO CU BUREAU IN DEPARTMENT, WE ARE IN LAST STAGE OF WORKING OUT DETAILS FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANT DURING APRIL TO GAETAN NIKOBAMYE, SECRETARY GENERAL OF PRESIDENCY. TODAY, WHILE REVIEWING TRIP PLANS WITH HIM, HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT MICOMBERO HAD ASKED HIM TO RAISE WITH US POSSIBILITY THAT MRS. MICOMBERO TAG ALONG, SO THAT SHE COULD ALSO SEE THE U.S.

2. AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THIS WOULD BE NONGASTARTER, SINCE PRESIDENT'S WIFE WOULD NOT WANT TO GO TO SAME PLACES AS NIKOBAMYE, AND SINCE HIS TRIP (AND OUR INTEREST IN IT) WOULD BE RUINED IF HE HAD TO DROP HIS OBJECTIVES IN ORDER TO SHEPHERD MRS. MICOMBERO. FURTHERMORE, NIKOBAMYE SAID THAT SHE NEVER TRAVELLED ABROAD WITHOUT A SMALL RETINUE OF 3 OR 4 WOMEN, AND WE NOTED THAT WHOLE AFFAIR WOULD HAVE TO BE EXPENSE OF BURUNDI GOVERNMENT.

3. NIKOBAMYE THEN POSED TWO QUESTIONS. FIRST WAS WHETHER WE (I.E. CU BUREAU) EVER AUTHORIZED INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANTS TO WIFE OF FOREIGN CHIEF OF STATE, SO THAT, AT SOME FUTURE TIME, MRS. MICOMBERO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM SAME TYPE OF PROGRAM AS IS NOW PLANNED FOR NIKOBAMYE. I SAID THAT I DID NOT RPT NOT KNOW, BUT WOULD INQUIRE, ALTHOUGH I WAS SURE THAT USG WOULD NEVER PAY FOR RETINUE. SECOND QUESTION WAS WHETHER MRS. MICOMBERO COULD, ALTERNATIVELY, MAKE TRIP TO STATES, WITH HER STAFF, IN PURELY PRIVATE CAPACITY, BUT AT SAME TIME, GET SOME HELP OR

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COURTESIES FROM USG.

4. I REPLIED THAT MANY SPOUSES OF CHIEFS OF STATE VISITED U.S. PRIVATELY, AND AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE, BUT FRANKLY, I WAS UNAWARE OF EXTENT TO WHICH USG, IF AT ALL, FACILITATED SUCH TRIPS OR PROVIDED SECRET SERVICE PROTECTION FOR EXAMPLE. NIKOBAMYE SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE EARLIEST ANSWER TO BOTH QUESTIONS, SINCE THERE WOULD BE CHANCE, IF PRIVATE VISIT FEASIBLE, THAT SHE MIGHT WANT TO LEAVE BURUNDI AT SAME TIME THAT HE PLANNED, I.E., AT START OF APRIL. (THEY BOTH ALSO WANT TO VISIT QUEBEC.) I NOTED THAT, OF COURSE, BURUNDI EMBASSY IN U.S. WOULD BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO PLANNING AND ARRANGEMENT.

5. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT MICOMBERO IS CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH PHASE OF PRIVATE FASCINATION WITH THINGS AMERICAN. HE KNOWS THAT HE CANNOT EXPECT AN INVITATION TO VISIT, AND HE HAS FORTUNATELY NOT YET THOUGHT UP PLOY OF GOING TO NEW YORK TO ADDRESS UNITED NATIONS. HENCE, HE WANTS TO SEE THE U.S. THROUGH EYES OF THOSE CLOSE TO HIM, AND HE SAID AS MUCH WHEN HE PERSONALLY SUGGESTED THAT WE INVITE NIKOBAMYE (WHO, INCIDENTALLY, IS A HUTU). NOW, IT IS HIS WIFE WHOM HE ALSO WISHES TO MAKE THE TRIP.

6. ALTHOUGH THERE WILL BE NO IMMEDIATE PAYOFF IN ANY CASE IN TERMS OF IMMEDIATE BILATERAL POLITICAL ISSUES, I CONSIDER THIS INTEREST IN THE U.S. TO BE A HEALTHY SIGN. I WOULD WANT BOTH TO ENCOURAGE IT IF POSSIBLE, AND, AT LEAST, TO AVOID ANY IMPLICATION THAT WE WERE GIVING MRS. MICOMBERO A BRUSH-OFF. FRANKLY, I THINK THAT WHEN PRESIDENT CALCULATES COST OF MONTH'S JOURNEY IN U.S. AND CANADA FOR HIS WIFE AND RETINUE, HE MAY DECIDE IT IS EXCESSIVE FOR BURUNDI AND MAY POSTPONE IT. HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO BE IN POSITION TO SAY, IF THIS ACCORDS WITH USUAL DEPARTMENTAL PRACTICE, THAT MRS. MICOMBERO WILL BE WELCOME IN U.S. IN PRIVATE CAPACITY, AND THAT WE WILL LEND ALL HELP THAT WE CAN TO BURUNDI EMBASSY IN WORKING OUT DESIRED ITINERARY AND IN FACILITATING COURTESY CONTACTS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF COUNTRY. IF A CALL ON MRS. FORD COULD BE ADDED, THAT WOULD BE ICING ON CAKE. PLEASE ADVISE.  
MARK

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